

Message Text

SECRET

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E.O. 11652 XGDS-3

TAGS: MASS, JO, US

SUBJECT: HAWK MISSILES FOR JORDAN

FOR UNDERSECRETARY SISCO FROM THE AMBASSADOR

REF; STATE 219924

1. BECAUSE KING IS UNAVAILABLE TO MEET UNTIL LATE IN THE MORNING LOCAL TIME AND BECAUSE RIFAI HIMSELF HAS BEEN HELPFUL AND SYMPATHETIC ON THE HAWK MISSILES ISSUE, I SAW RIFAI ON REFTEL EARLY MORNING SEPTEMBER 16 LOCAL TIME. KING WOULD NOT MAKE DECISIONS ON THIS IN ANY EVENT WITHOUT CONSULTING RIFAI. I MADE ALL OF THE POINTS IN YOUR TELEGRAM APPROPRIATE TO AN INTIAL PRESENTATION TO HIM.

2. RIFAI'S INTIAL REACTION WAS PARTLY TO QUIBBLE ABOUT SOME OF THE STATEMENTS IN THE LETTER AND WHAT THEY MEANT. WHEN HE REALIZED THE URGENCY AND NECESSITY OF MOVING AHEAD, HE SAID PERSONNAL HE WOULD HAVE NO OPPOSITION TO PUTTING IN THE LETTER JUST AS IT WAS IN THE TEXT WHICH YOU SENT ME. HOWEVER HE SAID HE THOUGHT THE KING WOULD REACT EVERY STRONGLY TO HAVING THIS A PUBLIC LETTER SINCE IT CONTAINS WHAT WILL READ HERE AND IN THE ARAB WORLD AS A LOT OF "HUMILIATING CONDITIONS." AS YOU KNOW FROM MY PAST TELEGRAMS ON THIS SUBJECT I TOO HAVE BEEN CONCERNED ABOUT THIS POINT.

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3. AFTER SOME DISCUSSION RIFAI ASKED WHY CANT WE CLASSIFY THE TEXT OF THE LETTER WHICH YOU SENT TO ME AND SEND IT TO THE CONGRESS IN THAT FORM. A SEPARATE UNCLASSIFIED LETTER WHICH WOULD BE LESS EXPLICIT BUT TO WHICH THE CLASSIFIED LETTER WOULD BE LINKED, COULD BE SENT FOR PUBLIC PRESENTATION. RIFAI THOUGHT THIS APPROACH WOULD HAVE A MUCH BETTER CHANCE OF SUCCESS WITH THE KING. I TOLD RIFAI THAT HE SHOULD KNOW THAT ANY CLASSIFIED LETTER WOULD BE LIKELY TO LEAK. HE SAID THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THAT AND THEY COULD ACCEPT THAT AS A REAL POSSIBILITY BUT IT WOULD MAKE IT MUCH EASIER FOR THEM HERE AND IN THE ARAB WORLD IF THAT PROCESS WERE FOLLOWED RATHER THAN A SINGLE UNCLASSIFIED LETTER.

COMMENT: I BELIEVE RIFAI IS FULLY AWARE OF THE FACT THAT TEXT WILL LEAK FROM THE CONGRESS AND IS PREPARED TO ACCEPT THAT FACT AS WELL AS TO ENCOURAGE WITH THE KING THIS ROUTE OF ACHIEVING WHAT SENATOR CASE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE. I AM SURE THAT THE MERITS AND MECHANICS OF THIS APPROACH WILL NOT BE LOST ON SENATOR CASE. END COMMENT.

4. I HAVE NO WAY OF JUDGING HOW FAR YOU ARE COMMITTED TO CONGRESS ON A SINGLE UNCLASSIFIED LETTER AND GAVE RIFAI NO REASON TO BE SURE THAT OUR RESPONSE WOULD BE AGREEABLE TO HIS SUGGESTION. HOWEVER I BELIEVE THE SUGGESTION HAS MERIT.

5. RIFAI LOOKING OVER THE TEXT OF YOUR LETTER SUGGESTED THE ADDITIONAL UNCLASSIFIED LETTER MIGHT BE ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES. QUOTE. THE GOVERNMENT OF JORDAN HAS INFORMED US THAT IT INTENDS TO USE THE HAWK MISSILES SOLELY FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE AREA OF ITS CAPITAL AND OTHER FIXED INSTALLATIONS. THE BATTERIES WILL BE INSTALLED AT THESE LOCATIONS AS DEFENSE, ANTI-AIRCRAFT WEAPONS. THE GEOGRAPHIC SITUATION OF THESE SITES AND THE PLANNED CONFIGURATION OF THE HAWK INSTALLATIONS WILL CLEARLY DEMONSTRATE THE INTENT OF THE JORDANIAN GOVERNMENT TO USE THE WEAPONS FOR PURELY DEFENSIVE

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PURPOSES. THE TRAINING TO BE PROVIDED BY THE US GOVERNMENT WILL BE TRAINING APPROPRIATE TO THE ABOVE DESCRIBED DEFENSIVE WEAPONS SYSTEM. END QUOTE

6. I WOULD NOT OF COURSE COME BACK TO YOU IF I DID NOT BELIEVE THAT THERE WAS A SERIOUS PROBLEM OF THE KING'S REJECTION ON THE BASIS OF THE PUBLIC REACTION OF THE MORE EXTENSIVE DOCUMENT. SINCE IT HAS BEEN MY

IMPRESSION THAT CONGRESS IS SEEKING JORDANIAN ASSURANCES
RATHER THAN PUBLIC HUMILITATION OF HUSSEIN, I BELIEVE
THE PROPOSAL HAS MERIT.

7. KING WILL BE LEAVING FOR AQABA WITHIN THE NEXT
SIX HOURS, ALTHOUGH I CAN GET TO HIM DOWN THERE WITH ONLY
SLIGHT AMOUNT OF ADDITIONALTIME. PICKERING

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